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Former Dean Wade J. Newhouse Jr. dies at 91



Students recalled a professor with a courtly demeanor and a proponent of the transformative work of lawyers in areas such as education and the civil rights movement.

Wade J. Newhouse Jr., a longtime SUNY Buffalo Law School faculty member and dean of the school from July 1986 to December 1987, passed away on May 21. A resident of Getzville, N.Y., he was 91 years old.

During his tenure as dean, Newhouse reviewed the Law School's administrative structure, using computer technology to improve budget planning, internal operations and record-keeping. He also worked to build

stronger ties between the Law School and its alumni. During his deanship, the school celebrated its 100th anniversary.

But his service to the Law School was not confined to his brief tenure as dean.

The design of John Lord O'Brian Hall in large part reflects his influence. Before its completion and dedication in 1974, Newhouse was the architects' faculty representative for decisions on configuring classrooms, the size of faculty offices and the many other details that characterize the Law School's home. "When you build a law school building, there are all kinds of interests to be satisfied," says emeritus Professor Marjorie Girth. "If he thought it would make the students' experience better and the faculty interaction better, that's what he went for."

Newhouse also served as director of the Charles B. Sears Law Library on three occasions, during one term introducing the Nexis legal research computer program. Additionally, he was director of the Edwin F. Jaekle Center for State and Local Government Law, and served terms as assistant dean in 1961-62 and associate dean from 1966 to 1969.

In 1970, Newhouse worked with Norman Rosenberg '71 to organize a highly successful clinic to help Buffalo public school students claim their due-process rights when they were suspended or expelled from school.

Rosenberg, then an assistant professor at the Law School, recalls, "Before Wade, there was very little attention paid to school law issues. He had this vision about protecting students who were caught up in school disciplinary issues. We built this thing into a very vibrant, very successful enterprise, and it was certainly meaningful to the kids in Buffalo who were in trouble and now had an opportunity to have lawyers represent them and help them through the process. Wade's conviction was that these kids had the right to some contin-

uing education – the schools couldn't just kick them out on the street. He was intellectually and personally committed to this issue."

Girth also points to Newhouse's support for the full and fair inclusion of women at the Law School during the early days of the feminist movement, advocating for female applicants in the admissions process and in hiring faculty members and research assistants.

A Tennessee native (his voice retained a hint of Southern drawl all his life) and a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, Newhouse joined the Buffalo faculty in 1958 after teaching at the law schools of Creighton and Columbia universities.

In Buffalo, students recalled a professor with a courtly demeanor and a proponent of the transformative work of lawyers in areas such as the civil rights movement. "I never saw Professor Newhouse without a suit," says Michael Rosen '94, now a policy adviser in the Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes, an arm of the U.S. Treasury Department. "He was just that type of old-school person. He really wanted you to understand the tremendous responsibility that attorneys have to their clients and to these types of issues."

As a scholar, Newhouse focused his research on the legal rights of disabled persons, public employee relations law, and law and public education. He also was called upon to serve on the Fleischmann Commission, a committee to study the quality, cost and financing of public education in New York State. The commission's 1972 report recommended busing to end racial segregation and proposed a state takeover of all public elementary and secondary schools.

The Law School celebrated his service in 1990 when it awarded him its highest honor, the Edwin F. Jaekle Award.